



A Policy Proposal to Protect Denver Renters and Keep Their Homes Safe

Bill Sponsors



Shontel M. Lewis

Council Member | District 8



Darrell B. Watson

Council Member | District 9

The Story: Denver Renters Left Out In the Cold

- In the cold of winter, last March, a burst water pipe at Welton Park Apartments left residents without running water for over a week.
- Residents were forced to use portable toilets in a cold alley and fill water from a dirty hose to cook meals. They were not offered assistance.
- This policy will protect renters from future incidents by allowing DDPHE to order landlords to provide relocation assistance to tenants when a building is deemed uninhabitable.

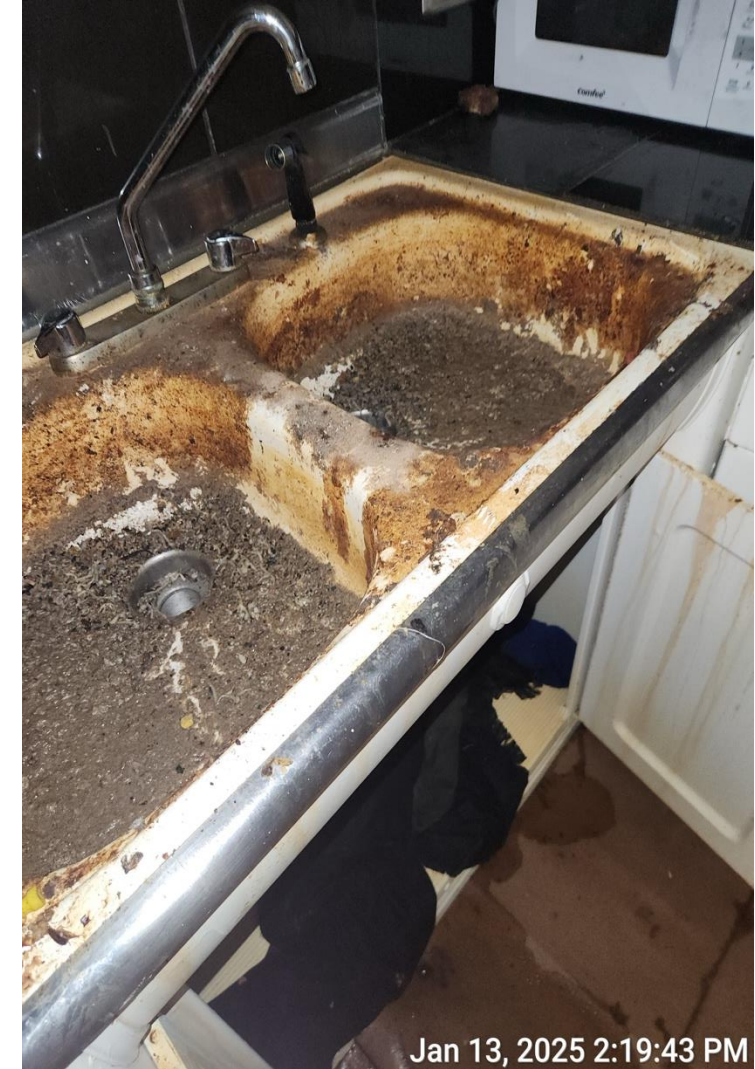


Complying with SB24-095 and Colorado's State Habitability Laws

- Colorado's updated Warranty of Habitability code requires safe, sanitary conditions for rented homes, dwelling units, and apartments.
- State law (**SB24-095**) requires landlords to ensure that homes are fit for human habitation and do not interfere with tenants' life, health, or safety.
- If life, health, or safety are at risk, then state law requires landlords to provide relocation assistance if requested by tenants.



The Problem:
Non-compliant
landlords simply
ignore the fines
and wait for the
courts to act or
force collections.



The Problem:

Gaps in Denver's Municipal Code Leave Denver Renters in the Cold and Without Relocation Help

- DDPHE has the power to placard a building when it is uninhabitable, forcing residents to vacate until the issue is fixed.
- The placard is a notice of an uninhabitable condition to the landlord, triggering state law thresholds.
- **DDPHE does not currently have the power to order relocation assistance, meaning the tenant must exercise that right under state law.**
- This creates a situation in which DDPHE could unwittingly create displacement or avoid placarding a building to prevent displacement.

The Solution: Give DDPHE the Teeth to Enforce State and Local Laws to Protect Renters

- 1. Increase DDPHE Oversight:** The proposal strengthens DDPHE's authority to enforce habitability standards at apartments and other rental units.
- 2. Mandate Relocation Assistance for Tenants:** The policy would require landlords to provide relocation assistance when their building fails to meet state or local housing habitability standards.
- 3. Mandate Consequences of Non-Compliance:** Authorizes DDPHE to place liens to recoup costs when the City covers relocation assistance.



Draft Policy Proposal

Sec. 27-26: Inspections

- DDPHE can request property management records as part of the inspection.

Sec. 27-27: Enforcement & Penalties

- DDPHE can issue fines and order landlords to fix habitability problems until they are corrected.

Sec. 27-28: Designation of Unfit Dwellings

- DDPHE may order reasonable accommodations in the event of an uninhabitable condition and may so order without placarding if placarding would lead to displacement.
- If the city covers the costs of accommodation instead of a noncompliant landlord, it may place a lien in the amount of the cost of the accommodation 5% of the costs of alternate accommodations.



TIMELINE AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Jan. / Feb. 2025: Stakeholder Meetings with Tenant Advocacy Groups, like East Colfax Community Collective

Feb. / March 2025: Stakeholder Meetings with the Apartment Association and Landlords

Feb. 24, 2025: Budget and Policy Committee Presentation

March 2025: Industry Roundtable

March 2025: Present to the Safety Committee

April 2025: Second Reading at City Council



Questions and Discussion

